Indo-Pak secretary level peace-talk

4626. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as a result of recent remarks made by the Pakistani Minister of External Affairs the apprehensions of adverse effect on further dialogue of Indo-Pak secretary level peace-talk are likely to be increased.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) No such remarks have come to the notice of the Government.

Changing political situation in neighbouring countries

†4627. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking cognizance of the continuously changing political situation in the neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) Government's reaction thereto;

(d) whether it is a fact that the above changing situations would not only promote the orthodoxy in their countries but also affect India adversely;

(e) whether Government propose to help them so that democratic system is strengthened there; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government are aware of developments in our neighbouring countries.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) to (f) While it is our policy not to comment or intervene in the internal affairs of the other countries, all developments affecting India's interests will be suitable taken into account in Government's policies.

Trans-Asian Rail Project

4628. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Trans-Asian Rail Project has taken a concrete shape by now;

(b) if so, the details thereof with the names of the countries which have agreed to participate in the project with the length of rail network in each country and the cost of the total project with share of each country there; and

(c) if not, by when the project is likely to be finalized?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Trans-Asian Rail Project is an initiative of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). An Inter-Government agreement on Trans-Asian Railway has been negotiated under the auspices of UNESCAP in November 2006. The Agreement lists the railway lines of international importance and lays down the guiding principles for the technical characteristics for providing seamless transport. A copy of the Agreement is enclosed Statement I and II (*See* below).

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Russia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Vietnam (18 countries) have so far signed the Agreement.

The Union Cabinet, in its meeting held on 08.03.2007, has approved the signing and ratification of the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Trans-Asian Railway by India. The process for signing the agreement by India has been initiated by the Ministry of Railways.

The total Trans-Asian Rail network in 28 countries is 80,900 km. For India, the route will enter India at Tamu bordering Myanmar as well as from